

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Reply, claims 1, 4-5, 10 and 13-16 will be pending, claims 17 and 18 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and claims 1, 5 and 13-16 will have been amended to further clarify that "a user . . . affirmatively accepted the schedule". Moreover, claims 1, 13 and 15 have also been amended to correct informalities that place the claims in better condition for allowance. Applicants note that this Reply is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance, and no acquiescence as to the propriety of the examiner's rejections is made by the present Reply.

In the outstanding Final Office Action of June 14, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 17 and 18 under Section 101. Upon entry of this Reply, and the amendments contained herein, claims 17 and 18 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer thereby rendering the rejection moot. Thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the outstanding rejection.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 4-5, 10, and 13-18 under Section 103 as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art (hereinafter referred to as "AAPA") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0193986 to Alphonsus A. Schirris (hereinafter referred to as "SCHIRRIS"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,725,256 to Nandakishore A. Albal *et al.* (hereinafter referred to as "ALBAL"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections and request that the Examiner withdraw the same and allow the above captioned application to mature into a U.S. patent.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of AAPA, SCHIRRIS and ALBAL do not teach or suggest, alone or in any proper combination, the recitations of

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independent base claims 1, 5, and 13-16. For example, the posited combination of AAPA, SCHIRRIS and ALBAL does not teach or suggest, *inter alia*, the recitations of “a receiver that receives a message from the second information processing apparatus when a user of the second information processing apparatus has affirmatively accepted the schedule corresponding to the transmitted message” as recited in claims 1, 13, and 15; or, *inter alia*, the recitations of “the message return indicating whether a user of the first information processing apparatus has affirmatively accepted the schedule corresponding to the transmitted message” as recited in claims 5, 14, and 16.

Instead, referring to column 6, lines 1-5 of ALBAL, which was referenced by the Examiner at page 6 of the outstanding Office Action, ALBAL teaches a message receipt notification feature that notifies a sender that the recipient has received the email message. ALBAL does not teach or suggest any indication of a status of acceptance or rejection of a schedule by the other user, much less an affirmative acceptance as claimed in all of the pending claims. Likewise, AAPA and/or SCHIRRIS do not teach or suggest, alone or in combination, any indication of a status of acceptance or rejection of a schedule by the other user. Hence, if one were to attempt to combine ALBAL to AAPA and SCHIRRIS in the manner suggested by the Examiner, the combination system would only notify the sender of an email message when the recipient has received the message, but the combination system would not indicate whether a schedule was ever accepted by the recipient. Thus, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of pending claims 1, 4, 5, 10, and 13-16 and an indication of allowability of the same in the next Official correspondence.

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Dependent claims 4 and 10 are also submitted to recite further patentable subject matter of the invention and therefore are also believed allowable over the prior art. As such, allowance of the dependent claims is deemed proper for at least the same reasons noted for the independent claims, in addition to reasons related to their own recitations.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all of the claims in the present application.

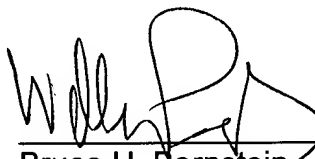
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants note that this Reply is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance, and no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejections is made by the present Reply. All amendments to the claims which have been made in this Reply, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should an extension of time be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application, including any extensions of time required to place the application in condition for allowance by an Examiner's Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Kazutoyo MAEHIRO et al.



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